

Pennsylvania. State Advisory Committee

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# PENNSYLVANIA

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1961 Report to the Commission on Civil Rights  
from the State Advisory Committee



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United States Commission on  
 Civil Rights. Pennsylvania  
 Pennsylvania 1961 report to  
 the Commission on Civil

Population statistics by race for 1950 and 1960,  
 as shown in the Advance Report for Pennsylvania  
 for the 1960 Census of Population:

	1950	1960	<i>Percent increase</i>
TOTAL . . . . .	<u>10,498,012</u>	<u>11,319,366</u>	<u>7.8</u>
WHITE . . . . .	9,853,848	10,454,004	6.1
NONWHITE . . . . .	<u>644,164</u>	<u>865,362</u>	<u>34.3</u>
Negro . . . . .	638,485	852,750	33.6
Indian . . . . .	1,141	2,122	86.0
Japanese . . . . .	1,029	2,348	128.2
Chinese . . . . .	2,258	3,741	65.7
Filipino . . . . .	(1)	1,640	. . .
All other . . . . .	1,251	2,761	. . .

<sup>1</sup> Not available.

## INTRODUCTION

Although there has never existed real cause for serious concern about discrimination in Pennsylvania, it is a fact that during the past 2 years the atmosphere relating to civil rights has improved considerably.

Aside from the general enlightenment of the citizens on these matters throughout our Commonwealth, the assurances received by our Committee in 1959 from Gov. David L. Lawrence, as to his real interest in civil rights, have been manifested in legislation which his administration has recently sponsored, and some of which has already been enacted into law.

The beneficent effects will be readily apparent from the reports of the Subcommittees which follow.

## EDUCATION

The only serious criticism in this field reported by the Subcommittee 2 years ago related to alleged discrimination on the part of some institutions of higher learning in denying admission to certain individuals because of religion. These difficulties were enumerated in our last report.

The present administration in Pennsylvania, in order to eliminate either the possibility of or the actual existence of any such discrimination, introduced legislation which was overwhelmingly adopted by the upper chamber of the legislature, the senate. This proposed legislation would make it illegal for institutions of higher learning to refuse a student's application because of race, religion, color, ancestry, or national origin. Educational institutions, which are either religious or private, and receive substantial financial support from a religious denomination are exempted from the proposed law. If this legislation is passed by the members of the house of representatives, it is certain to be signed by the Governor, since it is a part of the legislative program of his administration. In

such an eventuality, it would eliminate the only apparent item of criticism in the field of education.

## PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Our Commonwealth emphasized its determination in the general field of civil rights when it adopted the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act on February 28, 1961, having for its avowed purpose the elimination of discrimination against any individuals or groups by reason of their race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, or national origin in the matters of employment, housing, and public accommodations. This new law becomes effective on September 1, 1961. Henceforth the enforcement of these rights in Pennsylvania shall be deemed a proper exercise of the police power for the protection of the public welfare, prosperity, health, and peace of all of the people. Broad in its scope, it is a giant step forward and seems well designed to achieve its objectives.

While there has been a steady decrease in recent years in complaints concerning refusal to give equal service in summer resorts, hotels, public swimming pools, restaurants, places of entertainment, barber and beauty shops, bowling alleys, and related establishments, this new law should effectively discourage any future resistance to serving every person without discrimination.

## HOUSING

Throughout our Commonwealth, there have been many cases of housing discrimination, not only in the larger cities but in many other communities as well. While the Negroes were affected primarily, members of other minority groups were also subject to such discrimination.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Act also prohibits discrimination and segregation in housing accommodation, where selling, leasing, or financing is concerned. The wide scope of these particular provisions does not apply in the cases of personal residences, including two-family units in which the owner personally resides. Similarly excluded are housing facilities of any denominational institution, or charitable or educational organization that is operated for its members, if such facilities are used to promote the aims or purposes of the organization.

## EMPLOYMENT

For the past 5 years, Pennsylvania has had a Fair Employment Practice Act, under which it is an unlawful employment practice for any employer to discriminate against any individual because of his race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, or national origin. Responsibility for enforcement of this law was assigned to a commission bearing the name of the act. Its principal efforts were to use education and persuasion to achieve compliance with the provisions of the legislation. Surprisingly good results were achieved in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and many other areas in Pennsylvania, where many significant improvements were effected. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, in part, enlarges the powers and responsibilities of the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Practice Commission. It is now a nonpartisan departmental administrative unit in the Department of Labor and Industry with full power to receive, investigate, and pass upon charges of unlawful discriminatory practices.

The new impetus which this legislation provides in this particular field certainly should be most beneficial. In the true sense, however, it is hoped that men and women of good will recognize their responsibilities and the opportunity for real service in treating each individual desiring employment without discrimination, so that a lasting solution to the problem may be achieved.

### *Migratory workers*

This is the field in which the least progress has been made in Pennsylvania. In fact, a determined effort was made in the senate last year to enact legislation which would have nullified some of the progress that had been made in previous years toward providing improved treatment and living conditions for migrant workers.

It now appears that future gains and improvements must be brought about by Federal legislation.

## CONCLUSION

No developments of significance can be reported in the other fields of inquiry that were included in the 1959 report.

The lack of a staff makes it difficult to make careful studies of existing statistics and pertinent facts in each specific field. Nevertheless, it is very apparent that Pennsylvania is progressing slowly but surely in the direction of increased protection of civil rights and in the elimination of discriminatory practices.

The existing and pending legislation, together with the increasing enlightenment of the public, will certainly result in an improved atmosphere in which all citizens of our Commonwealth may expect to be treated without discrimination.



